

*Youth / Make a joyful noise...*

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Charles Newton.

## WORLD, I AM YOUTH

World, I am Youth, unsettled and searching  
Exploring the heights and the plain.  
I wander your deserts, thirsty and pale  
I weep in the beating rain.  
Ascend I the mountains with eagerness,  
Hungry, and seeking my goal,  
Then into barbs of stinging thorns  
I fall with deluded soul.  
In your shadows of dusk I tremble.  
I fear death and even life,  
Tomorrow I laugh, and confidence  
Pervades my daily strife.  
World, I am Youth, the hope of your day  
I'm bewildered and young in this land.  
I'm searching your paths  
For a vision called truth  
—Give me your hand.









## ASTER

A great earthquake shakes a stone loose from a tomb  
The tomb is bare; the robes are empty  
And Mary cries out in fear.

The night is dark and lonely and the day long and flat  
Life is numb; a heart is empty  
They cry out in fear.

O God, where is my center, my soul, my being?  
O God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And the disciples went to a mountain in Galilee  
They worshipped and were commanded  
To go  
To teach  
To know . . .

For lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.  
And fear and trembling shook the earth with joy.



## YOUR CREATION

How wonderful is your creation, O God!

We stand in awe before

the vastness of the universe,

whose magnitude and wonder

grow in men's minds with

every new scientific insight.

the miracle of man,

whose staggering achievements

are but the meager scratchings

of the fullest potential

you intended for him.

the mystery of creation itself,

which causes us to ask:

"How did it all start?

Why are we here?"

the orderliness of life,

as seen in the natural laws

governing atoms and humans,

the remotest stars and the

smallest blade of grass.

the unity of spirit,

which we cannot always prove

with facts but which we often

can feel with faith

and unshakeable certainty.

Keep us sensitive to the needs  
of others. Help us to know your  
will for us and for all creation.

Guide us, our Father. Amen.







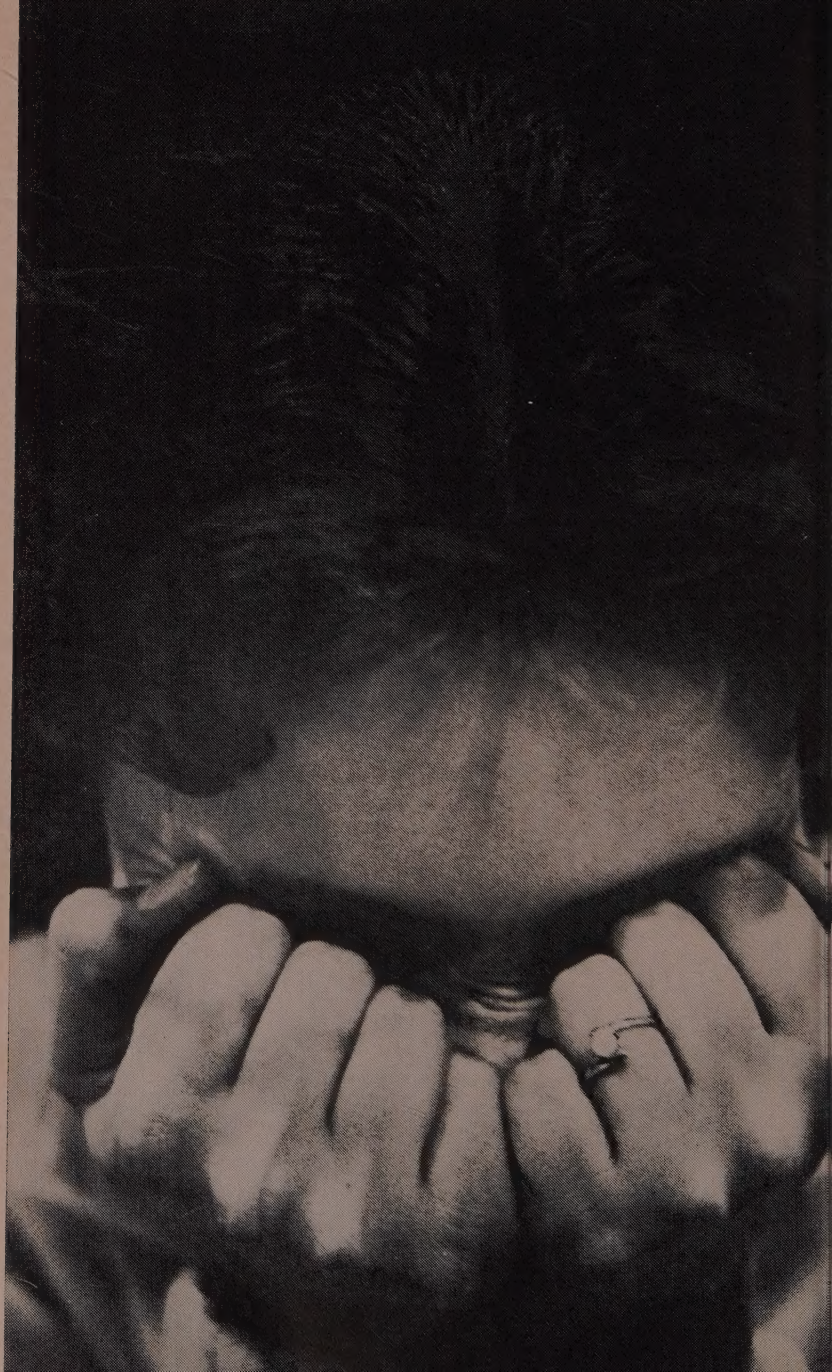




## WORLDS IN CONFLICT

My worlds are in conflict, O God.  
I laugh at life's absurdities, but I'm told I lack respect for life.  
I want to be beautiful in body and being,  
but your gift of sex is called sinful and virtue is scoffed at.  
I volunteer to serve people who can't afford help,  
but I'm told not to do anything for anyone unless I get paid.  
I'm condemned for demonstrating against community injustice,  
but brutality and mob rule are condoned by indifference.  
I'm educated in a fast-changing, science-thinking world of the Bomb,  
but I'm asked to live and think as they did in past generations.  
Some call this rebellion or impatience,  
Some call it controversy or subversion or revolution,  
Some call it a search for truth—  
the edge of a breakthrough to new worlds.  
Through the haze of this confusion and conflict,  
help me to know your truth for our world.







## MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE

Make me uncomfortable, O God, about what I'm doing with the mind you have given me . . . about studying too little and too sloppily . . . about memorizing facts rather than seeing Truth and Knowledge . . . about working for grades rather than for the excitement of learning.

Make me uncomfortable about my future hopes . . . about wanting college as a means toward gaining a better paying job, more security and social prestige rather than toward fulfilling your highest purpose for me.

Disturb me, O God.

Until I sense that my true calling as a student is . . .

To grow into the broadest, deepest, most vital person possible

To seize now this awesome opportunity for searching out wisdom

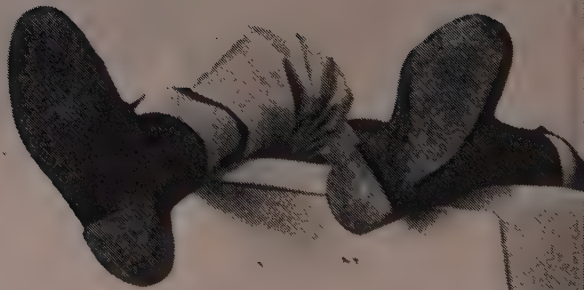
To find joy in reading and grappling and grasping

To live richly and responsibly

To do my part to help create a better world

To be constantly grateful for the capacity, creativity, and courage that are given to me . . . freely . . . by Thee. Amen.







## WE GIVE THEE THANKS

○ God, we give thee thanks for  
muddy shoes  
    which walk through your  
    creation and rejoice,  
renewed bodies  
    which breathe fresh air  
    and become whole,  
wandering minds  
    which are readied for the  
    mysterious deeps of faith,  
anxious hearts  
    which are opened to ourselves  
    and to others and to you,  
churning souls  
    which are calmed and cleansed  
    and set on fire,  
lonely moments  
    which hollow us out  
    to be filled again,  
reconciled friendships  
    which sustain us and  
    restore us and heal,  
special times  
    which we share in and  
    together risk your love.

Amen.





## MY BROTHER'S NEED

Almighty God

I, who have never known what it means not to have the things I desire, need to feel the poverty and hunger and despair among my fellow men.

I, who have felt nothing but the surge of youthful vitality in my body, need to understand what it means to be ill and unable to care for myself.

I, who have never stood alone in the crowd as odd or unacceptable, need to sense what it means to be judged and rejected by the color of my skin.

I, who have never experienced the desperation of a dependence on drug or drink, need to realize the agony of an addiction I cannot escape.

I, who have never really suffered or sacrificed or died, pray that I may become painfully aware of my brother's great need and that I may ache until I have reached out with honest help.



## JONAH AND ME

As you speak to me, O God,

I see the need in Nineveh.

But I refuse to go.

Those people are not worth saving!

I see the lonely pass me

in the halls at school, but who

wants to be friends of an outcast?

I see sad, scrawny faces

in photos from overseas.

Thank God, I'm in America!

Leave me alone, God!

Must you follow me everywhere?

Why don't you punish those evil people

in Nineveh and be done with it?

Why must I suffer for their sins?

Why does that ugly guy always

get assigned to the same

classroom as mine?

Why do those ungrateful Asians

and Africans condemn our

peace-loving nation?

Here I am, Lord. I have preached

your prophecy of doom.

But look what's happening!

These people listen and repent!

I just can't understand how

you can forgive such sinners!

That oddball is now class prexy!

And HE gave ME a top committee

post!

He's really queer!

Those young nations are

even becoming democratic!

They die for freedom!

What's the world coming to?

And now, Father, you are even

willing to forgive me!









## CRUCIFIXION

*His face was shattered*

Man is empty, O God!

We are afraid, suspicious, lonely,  
selfish, hateful, confused . . .

*His clothes were torn*

How do we fill the void, O God?

Do we build walls, shout threats,  
gossip lies, exploit the innocent,  
starve the hungry, slap the unlovely

. . .

*His body was battered*

O God, we reach for a better way.

Fill us with thy love.

Nurture us in thy truth.

Direct us in thy purpose.

*And truth was born!*







### SECOND ANNUAL SERVICE

Alone and in silence I watch the placid lake.  
Deceptive water . . . now tranquil, now  
turbulent  
Like life in its make.

Alone and in silence I meet each dawning day.  
Confusing hours . . . now joyful, now sorrowful  
What do these contrasts say?

O God, alone and in silence let me not be.  
Now tranquil, now turbulent,  
now laughing, now suffering.  
Alone . . . life asks too much of me.

But guided in silence by thy loving hand  
All of life . . . now peaceful, now struggling  
Unafraid I can stand. Amen.



## NO ONE KNOWS ME

My skin is a mask, O God.  
My face is beautiful, like a doll,  
but I'm no toy . . . I'm a human  
being. My face is pimply, but a  
deeper beauty heals the hurt  
and is the real me. My face is  
black, but not my heart and soul.

My deeds are a mask, O God.  
I talk big to boost my image,  
but I still am insecure. I mimic  
the crowd which molds my life,  
but I wonder what's happening  
to ME. I speak pious words, yet  
I doubt.

No matter what I am or what I do,  
I am not fully known,  
except by you.







## LONGING FOR BEAUTY

O GOD, WE HEAR VOICES OF UGLINESS AROUND US.

to hell with nigras! If the good Lord wanted us to be brothers,  
e would have made us all one color! / Kids got money to  
urn. Sell them something they don't need. They won't  
now any better. Cash in while they're green teens. It's  
good business. / What's wrong with cheating? Everybody  
does it. Just don't let yourself get caught. / I hate my  
parents! They treat me like a child, and yet they want me to  
ct grown-up! / He's a brain. He knows too much. Give  
him the cool treatment. That'll learn him! / What a sucker!  
He's got real talent. But he's wasting it on a church job. /  
Man, is she stacked! That's my speed. Wait till I get her  
out on a date. / They oughta fire that old man. He's  
over fifty—way past his prime time. Don't be sentimental—  
be efficient. / That's no religious painting. I can't figure it  
out. It disturbs me. These modern artists are all mixed up. /  
Being Catholic is bad enough. But did he have to marry a  
Puerto Rican?

IN THE MIDST OF THIS UGLINESS, O GOD,  
HELP US TO KNOW BEAUTY.



## SPORTSMANSHIP

Our Father,  
we thank you for the joy  
of a game well played.

We are grateful  
for the exercise  
    that strengthens our bodies,  
for the rules  
    that discipline our minds,  
for the practice  
    that sharpens our skills,  
for the competition  
    that enriches our friendships,  
and for the victory  
    that reveals us as we really are.

Help us to grow in stature,  
mind, skill, and companionship,  
so that whether we win or lose,  
we are victors in your sight,  
our Father.

These things we share in the name  
of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.





## THE MARVEL OF A CAR

O God,

I thank thee for the marvel of a car—alive and powerful at the touch of my hands and feet—a thing of tremendous possibilities—wonderful or terrible!

Help me to achieve the skill that will control it completely and wisely, like a tool . . . shaping a better life for me and those around me.

I thank thee for the promise of adventure that is mine each time I slip behind its wheel:

the thrill of the open road . . . far places . . . strange sights . . .  
new "neighboring!"

Make me aware, as I drive the streets of my town, signalling, stopping, waiting, turning, and zooming ahead—that I do not have to do merely with trucks, taxis, cars, bicycles, and pedestains, but—with PEOPLE!

People such as I know and touch as I walk the sidewalks  
and enter the homes of my neighborhood;

People such as I am—making mistakes, perhaps, but not  
really wanting to.

Because I like people and know how important their happiness and how precious they are to thee . . .

Let me be alert, courteous, patient,  
considerate of the rights of others on the road,  
gracious enough to give up some rights of my own,  
and always . . . careful, realizing that:

Another's pain would destroy my pleasure,  
another's loss would rob my gain,  
and the life I save IS just as precious as my own!

Amen.







## THE GIFT OF HUMOR

Dear God, we are thankful for the gift of humor in everyday life.

Amid sorrow and sour faces

we welcome moments of joy and sweetness.

Amid our struttings of pride,

we are embarrassed by the banana peels of humility.

Amid so many tensions of the unknown

we are relieved by the gentleness of quiet laughter.

Amid the tragedy of falseness and hate,

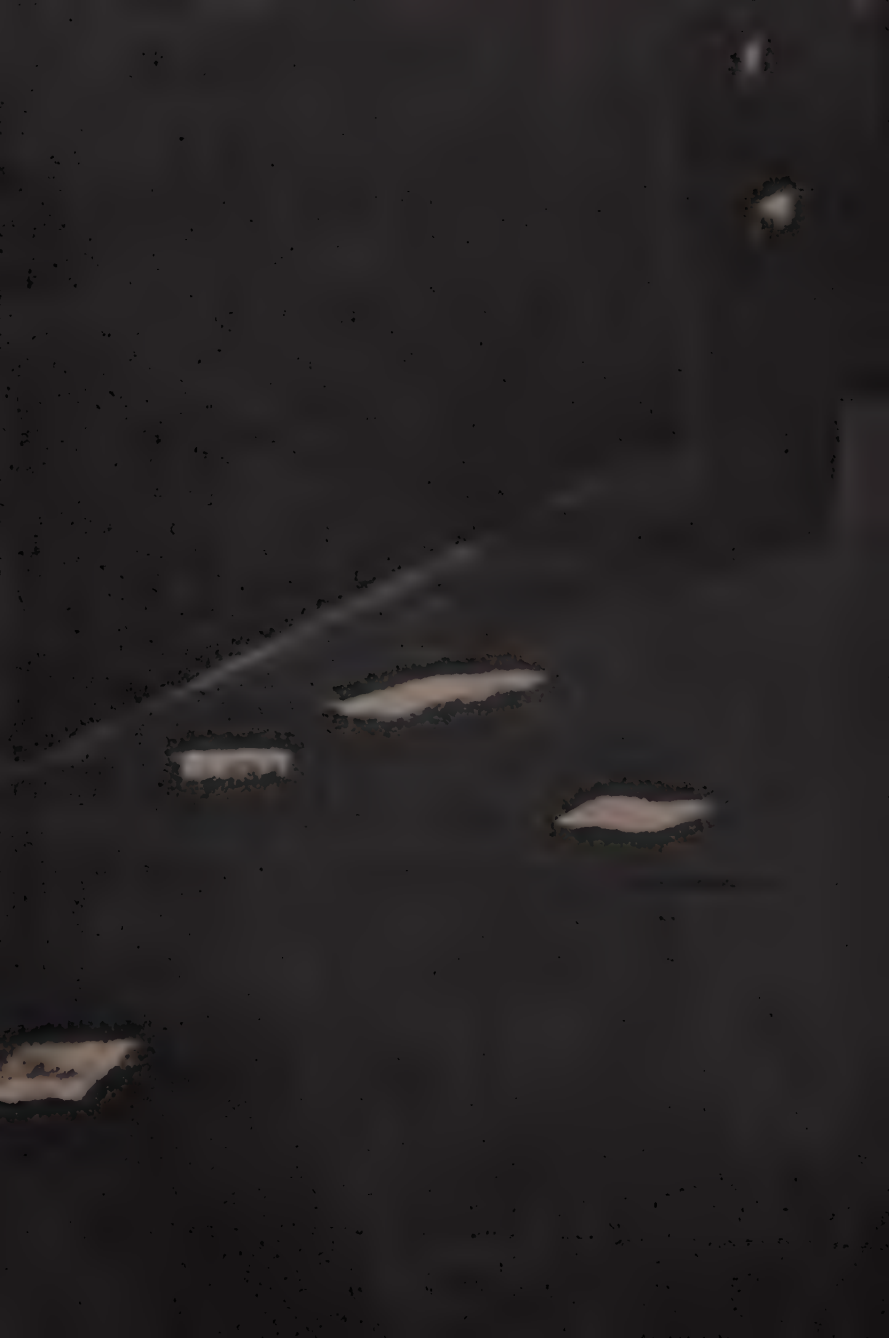
we search for the comedy of truth and love.

Amid our frequent wanderings from your way

we await the call to do your will.

Amen.







## MY COUNTRY

O God, I love my country. But my pride does not hide my discontent. We have too easily forgotten that your love and truth molded the men who have shaped our nation's ideals of freedom, justice and equality. While we condemn the atheist enemy who denies you, many of us ignore you. While we boast of a country governed by the people, we are stifled by the apathy of its good citizens. While we grow fat with the luxury living of our prosperous economy, we cringe at poverty pleas. While we design computers to decipher our complex, fast-changing, scientific world, we are soothed by easy answers. O God, help me to know what is right. Nourish the love within me to extend my hand to those who irk me most.



## THE THIRST

O God, help me to pray.  
Quiet my restlessness and  
still my noisy desires.  
Turn me toward your deep  
wells and away from my own  
shallow waters. Center me  
down into your love. Force  
me to let you hold me tightly.

O God, push me to dare to  
live on tip-toe. Stop me  
from being suspicious of  
enthusiasm or happiness or  
friendship. Lead me toward  
knowing another by giving  
of myself. Guide me  
towards loving leaps of faith.

O God, mold me with the clays  
of forgiveness and hold me  
in the hands of love. Draw  
me into the wells of  
your joy. Show me how to  
drink of deep waters. And  
help me, O God, to admit how  
thirsty I really am.

Amen.





Praying is one of man's most intimate and meaningful ways of communicating with God. All phases of life are possible topics of prayers, for God is at the center of all life. And we don't need to use fancy words. Just be ourselves. And since many of you have found help in the prayers appearing regularly on the back covers of YOUTH magazine, we're responding to your requests and reprinting some of these original prayers. You may wish to use this selection of prayers in your own personal devotions or with groups.

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